

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 AID-05 /078 W
----- 119073

R 300930Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7199

INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 710

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ECIN, DM

SUBJ: PRES KEREKOU'S RETURN FROM ECOWAS SUMMIT IN LAGOS

REF COTONOU 689

1. PRES KEREKOU DID IN FACT ATTEND ECOWAS SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN LAGOS. ON 27 MAY HE WAS PICKED UP BY A NIGERIAN GOVT AIRCRAFT, WHICH BROUGHT HIM BACK 29 MAY, TOGETHER WITH A GUINEAN DEL HEADED BY PM BEAVOGUI.

2. INTERVIEWED AT COTONOU AIRPORT, KEREKOU MADE NO COMMENT RE SUBSTANCE OF ECOWAS BUT HAILED THE AGREEMENT AS PROOF THAT ALL WEST AFRICA WISHED TO RID ITSELF OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM. HE DEVOTED GOOD PART OF HIS COMMENTARY TO SIGNIFICANCE OF VISIT BY CHIEFS OF STATE TO THEATRE COMPLEX BEING BUILT BY BULGARIA IN LAGOS. THIS PROJECT SHOWED, HE SAID, THAT THERE WERE NO LONGER ANY "OPTIONS" (MEANING, IN HIS VOCABULARY, CAPITALISM VS SOCIALISM) IN INTERNAIONAL COOPERATION. ERGO THOSE WHO SAY DAHOMEY'S SOCIALISM WILL KEEP AWAY FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE WRONG.

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3. REPLYING TO A QUESTION KEREKOU SAID HE DID NOT HAVE ANY

PRIVATE TALKS IN LAGOS WITH OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO MAKE SENSE OUT OF KEREKOU'S AIRPORT REMARKS (PARA 2 ABOVE) BY RERUNNING OUR TAPE OF RADIO BROADCAST. HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN DAHOMEAN REVOLUTIONARY LANGUAGE APPEAR AIMED AT CONVINCING DAHOMEANS THAT HIS REGIME IS ACTUALLY MOVING IN THE MAINSTREAM OF WEST AFRICAN POLITICO-ECONOMIC THOUGHT.

5. WE SUSPECT IN LAGOS KEREKOU MUST AT LEAST HAVE ENDEAVORED TO TALK PRIVATELY TO EYADEME, WHOM HE APPARENTLY WAS SO ANXIOUS TO SEE ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO (COTONOU 643).

6. THROUGHOUT KEREKOU'S ABSENCE FROM THE COUNTRY, THERE WAS WIDESPREAD DOUBT THAT HE WOULD REMAIN AWAY BECAUSE OF DISTURBANCES IN ABOMEY AND INCREASED ANTI-GOVT AGITATION BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS. THE ABOMEY COMMOTION, WHICH BEGAN 23 MAY INVOLVED LARGE SCALE RETALIATION BY RAM-PAGING MOB AGAINST POLICE WHO HAD BEATEN A PRISONER TO DEATH. POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND PRIVATE HOMES OF POLICEMEN WERE BURNED DOWN AND THEIR CARS SET AFIRE. ENTIRE POLICE FORCE HAD TO FLEE FROM TOWN, TO BE REPLACED BY GENDARMES AND TROOPS. MIN OF INTERIOR AIKPE COULD GET INTO ABOMEY ONLY WITH ARMORED CAR CONVOY. UNDERSTAND THIS TOWN IS AGAIN CALM (DETAILS BY AIRGRAM).
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